
A study on Development and Scope of Product or Brand Placement as an Integral Part of Tamil Cinema Industry

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Abstract:

Once told that the legendary filmmaker Satyajit Ray in shooting for his movie removed the name boards of specific Bengali shop in the backdrops because he thought that the brands or product display might distract the audience. However, things have changed in due course of time, where the brands placed in the frames, shots, scenes, and even in the film title cards and film song lyrics, where the brands get much visibility. Product or Brand placement is a basic advertising format presented through various media to attract the audience. Today, the Product or Brand placement is popularly known as in-film advertising has become an integral part of the film industry. In the Indian context, the Product or Brand placement in film is one of the most important marketing strategies that advertisers follow. This article analyzes and evaluates various Product or Brand placement strategies implemented for promotional purposes in Tamil films by selecting the films based on its popularity and box-office success. This article also discusses the influence and impact of Product or Brand placement in the Tamil film industry.

Keywords: Product, Brand, Placement, Promotion, Marketing, Tamil cinema.

1.1 Introduction:

For any business or company, marketing plays an essential element that always involves in exploring innovative ideas according to the changing mindset of the consumers. The marketing strategy for any best product depends on the 6Ps of marketing, namely Product, Price, Placement, Promotion, People, and Performance. The approach used by the Marketing industry to promote their product is known as Product or Brand placement.

The Product or Brand placement is the display of the product or logo that highlights the features of the product. The previous researches in marketing identified that Product or Brand placement had a capable reputation and impact on the company, not on sales. Effective Product or Brand placement is dependent upon identifying and communicating the brand's uniqueness, differentiation, and verifiable value.

The Product or Brand placement not restricted to posters or Newspapers; it can also be extended to Television, Radio, Cinema, and Video game, so on. Product or Brand placement through movies has identified as a better way to reach the target audience to influence them. Movies are the noticeable medium for entertainment in India, especially the Tamil cinema that integrated with colorful outfits, beautiful locations, singing, and dancing sequences. The movies communicate many things to the audience, such as grooming, fashion, and also about the latest trends. However, films concentrate on not only the local audience but also non-resident Indians. Product or Brand placement in film is a well-known concept in Hollywood and Bollywood, though this exercise is still a developing one in Kollywood, the Tamil cinema.

1.2 Objective:

The main objective of the article is to examine the following purposes, they are;

- To understand the development of film publicity.

- To analyze the evolution of Brand placement.
- To categorize the effectiveness of Brand placement in Tamil movies.

1.3 Significance of the Study:

This study proposed to provide an overview of Product or Brand placement in Tamil cinema since the very minimum number of studies carried out in this area and not much evidence of academic studies related to effectiveness and impact of Product or Brand placement, especially within Tamil cinema.

The main focus of this study is related to Product or Brand placement as a promotional tool and how product placement mix with integrated marketing communications strategy since the film industry provides a significant opportunity for strategically planned brand placements. However, other components of the marketing mix excluded from the study, and the outcome of this study shows how effectively the Product or Brand Placement has an impact on its consumers.

1.4 Methodology:

The study analyzes the key characteristics of Product or Brand placement with particular reference to its effectiveness and impact in Tamil cinema. Research design is the critical element of any study and related to the building of a house, which organizes a specific method and process for the collection of information and investigation for reasonable conclusions for the proposed study. The research design for this study, the descriptive method is selected that includes an accurate review of the literature with academic observations and analysis of information collected through reliable secondary data from various movies and published articles.

1.5 Cinema in India:

The Indian film industry is the leading one in the world in terms of producing movies every year from big budget to minimum budget classical works that offer variety. The Indian film industry consists cluster of regional films with more than 20 languages that consist of Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, Bengali, Punjabi, Bhojpuri, Assamese, and Gujarati. The most dominating among the Indian film industry is the Hindi film industry popularly known as 'Bollywood' located in Mumbai.

These regional language films in a race with each other's conformed market sections and benefits virtual monopoly in their respective region. The recent time the Indian film industry observed the release of a few classical works from the regional films that minted money in the box office and achieving popularity at the International level. The 'India Brand Equity Foundation' (IBEF) in its report states that the Indian film industry earned a revenue of Rs 165.7 billion in 2018 and estimated further growth of 4.98 percentage during 2018- 2020.

1.6 Product or Brand Placement:

Large numbers of advertisers are searching for more effective techniques in alternative to traditional advertising formats to reach an increasingly delicate audience. The Product or Brand Placement refers to the process involved in communication or promotional strategy of the product or brand available in the market. That is, the Product or Brand placement indicates the brand name, products, packages, signs, logos, trademark, and services. Technically speaking, Product or Brand placement is the practice and procedure of identifying the problem or opportunity in the market and finding a solution based on the market research.

Apart from that, the Product or Brand placements develop product and brand knowledge, awareness, and recall value between the consumers. A typical effective marketed product or brand includes various points of contact between the business and consumers through the press, radio, outdoor, television, digital, and social media advertising. Moreover, in India, cinema is identified as a critical alternative medium next to cricket, where the marketing agencies can effectively increase the audience's attraction through Product or Brand placement.

1.6.1 Product or Brand Placement in Cinema:

Nowadays, Product or Brand placement is a million-dollar business satisfying the film producers for reducing production costs and also to market well. In cinemas, the Product or Brand is placed in bond with the lead actors or actresses in various significant situations, because the consumers have compassion in following their dream heroes or heroines. Brand placement can be done in many different ways where it can naturally happen or can be a planned one or can be one that well organized in the movie for a financial benefit. That is, each frame of a film has got an opportunity for branding, as it is being identified as the most effective form of advertisement when it is a part of the movie's content. The pioneers in Brand placement can trace in the Oscar-winning Hollywood silent war film 'Wings' produced by Lucien Hubbard in 1927, which significantly displayed the bar of Hershey's chocolate was the first world film to display brand in cinema.

1.6.2 Product or Brand Placement in Indian Cinema:

Even though India's network integrated with various sub-cultures, languages, religions, and historical landmarks, it has created one central point for the marketers by offering remarkable advertising opportunities. Following Hollywood success, 'Chaltika Naam Gaddi,' the Indian Hindi comedy film produced by Anoop Sharma in 1958 was the first Indian film to display brand with yesteryear actor Madhubala sipping on 'Coca-Cola.' Similarly, the 70s and 80s witnessed the popularity of 'Rajdoot' bike in most of the films. Following these footsteps, the production companies have started approaching brands for such arrangements.

Tamil cinema in recent times has seen a spurt in this hard-to-ignore medium with the restless audience switching their channel or minds off to the more traditional form of advertisements. The regional cinema industry in India especially the Tamil cinema industry has a history for Brand or Product placement that can be traced from early 60s in the form of political propaganda. The first Brand or Product placement in Tamil cinema starts with three consecutive times Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Mr. M G Ramachandran, who can see placing the founder of DMK party leader C N Annadurai's photo in the background in the songs and scenes of his movies.

1.7 Interpretation and Analysis:

It is not difficult to find examples of Product or Brand Placement in films. It is challenging to find a movie without some elements of Product or Brand Placement. The Product or Brand Placement in movies can divide into two categories, 'Presence on the screen' and 'Product as Character,' respectively.

I. Presence on the Screen:

Placement in the movies classified as a verbal or visual that can describe or display products in the frame even though it is not related to the script. That is, Product or Brand placed in the foreground or background in the frame.

A study on Development and Scope of Product or Brand Placement as an Integral Part of Tamil Cinema Industry

1. The Product or Brand placement presence on the screen in Tamil cinema started with former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Mr. M G Ramachandran, who can be seen placing C N Annadurai, the founder of DMK party leaders photos in the background of songs and scenes in his movies like 'Nam Naadu' (1969) and 'Pallandu Vazhga' (1975), and party flag in 'Idhayakkani' (1975). However, he never propagandized these images, but he rightly placed the images in the scenes that had an impact, which converted each view into 'Votes.'



(Figure-1)

2. In the movie '7G Rainbow Colony' in 2004, almost, in the end, we can see the protagonist with Honda ID card (Figure-2) that understands he is working in the Hero Honda company. Likewise, in the movie 'Chandramuki' in 2005, can see the Tata Indicom billboards (Figure-3) are promptly displayed in the backdrops whenever the actor Rajinikanth appears on the screen. At the same time, in the movie 'Aaru' in 2005, the leading female character Thrisha will be selling Aircel Sim card (Figure-4) in front of a showroom, and in one scene, both the leading actors of the movie will be drinking Pepsi cola in the restaurant. In the movie 'Sachin' in 2005 the actor Vijay can be seen with Sunfeast biscuits (Figure-5) in one scene with a dialog stating "nama biscuits..." (our biscuits). Even in the movie 'Vettaiyaadu Vilaiyaadu' in 2006, starring Kamal Hassan can be seen using the Tata Sumo car (Figure-6) throughout the movie. Similarly, in the movie 'Rajini Murugan' in 2015, can see the actor Shiva Karthikeyan goes to Audi car (Figure-7) showroom and test drive the car, where the Sales Representative describes all the unique features of the Audi car.



(Figure-2)

(Figure-3)

(Figure-4)



(Figure-5)

(Figure-6)

(Figure-7)

3. Similarly, the Product or Brand placement of the product was done in one famous song sequence, "Why this Kolaveri di..." of the movie '3' in 2012, where the song choreographed in front of many brands such as Air Asia, Aircel, Super-Max and Lalitha Jewellers. (Figure-8) with the main protagonist Dhanush across various shots in the movie.



(Figure-8)

In the movies mentioned above, the Products or Brands displayed are in no way connected with the movies. They randomly placed in the foreground or background of the scene or shots. This kind of Product or Brand placement will have a significant impact because the Product or Brand will be seen with famous film celebrities and will have good recall value.

II. Product or Brand as Character:

In the movie, the character either consumes or associated with the Product or Brand as part of the story. This kind of Product or Brand placement will have a significant impact on the consumers and have a maximum level of recall value.

1. **Pudhu Pudhu Arthangal (1989):** In this movie, the Solidaire TV plays an important character with the old couple, Ruby and Baby, in the Goa sequence, where the Solidaire TV's billboards and product promptly seen.



(Figure-9)

2. **Raja Kaiya Vacha (1990):** In this movie, the leading character Raja joins Ashok Leyland Company as General Manager, and most of the movie happens in the Ashok Leyland Company and can see the logos and products of Ashok Leyland in every frame of the film.



(Figure-10)

3. **Aahaa (1997):** In this movie, Parasuraman is popularly called as 'Pepsi' Parasuraman since he owns a Pepsi Cola Manufacturing Company. The title of the movie itself has been adapted from the slogan of Pepsi Cola in the 80s and 90s "Yehi hai right choice baby, aahaa...". Throughout the movie, Brand Pepsi can see in most of the scenes.

4.



(Figure-11)

5. **Jillendru Oru Kaadhal (2006):** In the movie, the protagonist Gowtham works as the chief mechanic at Maruti Suzuki automobile company Mumbai endorse Maruti's Swift car. The actor found with Maruti's logo in the shirt, and the backdrop and even test drive the new vehicle on Indian roads.



(Figure-12)

6. **Polladhavan (2007):** In the movie ‘Polladhavan’ (2007), the protagonist Dhanush has a constant passion on ‘Bajaj Pulsar’ bike purchases it to get job, but unexpected turn of events happens after the bike gets theft is the concept of the movie, where the ‘Bajaj Pulsar’ bike plays an essential element in the movie. Throughout the movie, the product Bajaj Pulsar placed along with the protagonist.



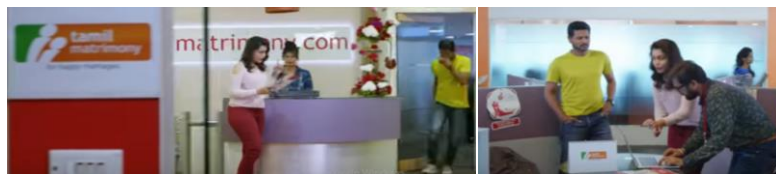
(Figure-13)

7. **Oru Kal Oru Kannadi (2012):** In this movie, the main characters Saravanan and his friend Parthasarathy works at Sathyam Cinemas, a multiplex as Ticket Checker and Canteen boy, and similarly, Meera joins Kingfisher Airlines as Air Hostess. Throughout the movie, logos and banners of Sathyam Cinemas and Kingfisher Airlines have seen promptly.



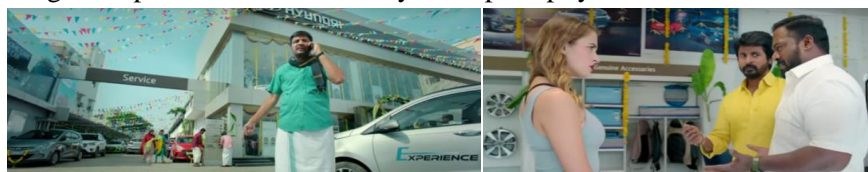
(Figure-14)

8. **Charlie Chaplin-2 (2019):** In this movie, the main protagonist Thiru along with his friends, runs a Matrimonial company by name Tamil Matrimony conducts 99 marriages successfully, and fortunately, the 100th marriage turns out to be his own, after he finds his perfect match in Saara.



(Figure-15)

9. **Mr. Local (2019):** Mano works as a salesperson in the KUN Hyundai showroom. In this movie, we can see the logo and product of the KUN Hyundai promptly in the movie.



(Figure-16)

In the movies mentioned above, the Products or Brands not displayed or placed just a presence. The Product or Brand plays a vital role in the movie as a character and has a relation with the main protagonist of the movie, which leads the customers to have close affection towards the Product or Brand.

1.8 Conclusion:

In the contemporary world, the advertisers are persistently demanding a range of promotional actions with innovative techniques to reach the vast audience (customer) successfully. The movie industry with mass reach, especially in the Tamil Nadu, is the evidence that Product or Brand started entertaining consumers along with their favorite film celebrities.

In recent times, the marketers extended their collaboration with the Tamil film industry to incorporate or disclose the features of their products in the movies as a resource of promotion. The reason for migrating from the conversational format of promotion to film promotion is because of the traditional method of advertising to film advertising is because of enormous benefits in all means for the Brand, film industry and the audience.

Incorporating the right product in the successful film will make a significant impact among the costumers because the filmmakers do entirely not depend on the sale of the ticket in generating the revenues, but also look for multiple resources of income flow for a single flow. Fortunately, the Tamil filmmaker's search for an innovative method to generated funds scoped for the booming of Product or Brand placement in the movie industry. When the consumer watches movies and comes across any Product or Brand, he feels the movie sentimentally because he sees not only the Product or Brand but also sees his favorite film celebrity with or endowing the Product or Brand. Because, in this promotional method, the recall value will be maximum and long last forever until the movies are active and remembered.

1.9 Reference:

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